

ProActive ReSolutions builds respectful workplaces through prevention programs and incident management.

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With so many cultures, generations, and genders integrating in our offices these days, companies are challenged with meeting the range of expectations that come with having a diverse workforce.

## Top of Mind: Embrace Diversity

"Our greatest strength as a human race is our ability to acknowledge our differences, our greatest weakness is our failure to embrace them." --Judith Henderson

Diversity can make or break a workplace. Competing ideals, expectations and social norms between groups can often lead to employees misinterpreting each other's actions and words, resulting in workplace conflict.

The best way to capitalize on your employees' individual differences is to set a standard for acceptance and healthy dialogue. When employees feel they can contribute their knowledge without fear or judgment, productivity and job satisfaction rates soar.

This month's issue of Active Voice focuses on how to embrace diversity and encourage great working relationships amongst your staff. When everyone is able to share their expertise and experience we gain broader perspectives and better results.

Chances are your clients are just as diverse as your work force, so go ahead and embrace their individuality!

> Judy Brooks, Managing Director

### This Issue

#### The Best Managed Companies

know how to pool their employees' diverse talents. When done properly, collaborative decision-making can result in quick, transparent solutions and effective outcomes. Using four simple steps you too can be on your way to success.

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## In the Media:



Australian Financial Review  
"I Have to Fire Someone." - Boss Coach Feature  
June 2008

Donald Trump made the phrase, "you're fired," humorous, but in reality letting someone go is a delicate process. If done improperly, firing one person can affect overall employee attraction and retention. In the June edition of the Australian Financial Review, Joe Moore, Director of ProActive ReSolutions, offers tips on how to respectfully fire someone. Moore walks through the process of preparing a script, keeping to the facts, and how to converse rather than lecture. Visit [www.afr.com](http://www.afr.com) to read the article.

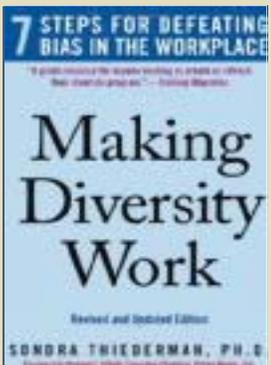
FINANCIAL REVIEW



National Safety Magazine  
"Workplace Conflict", by Joe Moore  
June 2008

Every workplace has its issues. Poor communication, friction amongst staff and low productivity rates are all too common in today's workworld, which is as diverse as it is competitive. Learn how one municipal facility, overrun with friction and bullying, overcame its challenges in just two months in the June edition of National Safety Magazine. After learning how to hold difficult conversations in a respectful manner these employees were able to let go of their anger and work through their frustration. Visit: [www.nasca.org.au](http://www.nasca.org.au) to find the article.

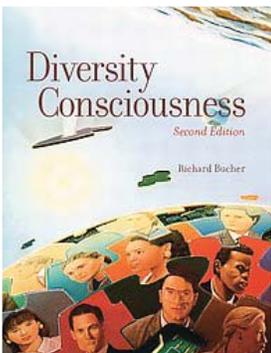
## Between the Lines:



Making Diversity Work: Seven Steps for Defeating Bias in the Workplace  
By Sondra Thiederman

Making Diversity Work offers fresh and fascinating ideas for reducing bias - one person at a time. Diversity expert Sondra Thiederman introduces seven steps to prevent bias from distorting your work relationships.

It's essential, according to the author, that everyone from low-level employees to business owners and executives, be more mindful of diversity in order to communicate more effectively, manage others and be more successful at work.



Diversity Consciousness: Opening Our Minds to People, Cultures and Opportunities (2nd Edition)  
By Richard D. Bucher

This empowering study on human diversity helps readers develop the ability to understand, respect, and value diversity—i.e. raise their "diversity consciousness"—and demonstrates how opening one's mind to the views of other peoples and cultures is central for a quality education and successful career. Personalizing the learning experience by weaving a wide variety of real-life student experiences and perspectives throughout the book, it discusses topics in a style that promotes self-reflection and dialogue, and uses an approach to diversity that is balanced, comprehensive, and well-integrated.

# Collaborative Decision-Making

When a diverse group is forced to work together towards a common goal, it can be a real challenge to agree on an action plan that suits everyone. If done properly, collaborative decision-making can speed up information collection, leverage expertise and improve outcomes.



**COMMON GROUND - Workplaces are filled with talented individuals of various backgrounds and expertise. Organizations that encourage staff to collaborate on projects effectively benefit from quick, transparent and effective decisions.**

There's nothing more frustrating than an unproductive meeting. The following four steps will guide you through the collaborative decision-making process and help you save time, use your resources more effectively, and come out of meetings with high quality results.

## 1. Set the objective and allow all participants to be heard

Every meeting should have a clearly defined foundation statement that allows participants to know what they are focusing on.

Once a foundation statement is established have the chair of the meeting ask each individual to contribute relevant experiences. Participants should contribute clear, concise thoughts and a scribe should record all input, exactly as it is given.

## 2. Identify Underlying Issues

Once all thoughts and experiences have been recorded ask participants to identify any underlying issues or problems.

For instance maybe projects have been running off schedule lately because of unrealistic timelines. Dig deeper and find out why these tight deadlines have been issued.

Every thought should be recorded so long as it is relevant to the foundation statement. This is not the time to evaluate input.

It's important at this stage to remember that there is no single, correct perspective. There are many ways to view a complex issue and people need an opportunity to discuss it from various perspectives.

Once all feedback is recorded it's time to prioritize the issues. Have participants rate the importance of the suggested challenges according to impact (on a scale of one to 100 how is this issue impacting the topic of discussion?) and solvability (on a scale of one to 100 how feasible is it to fix this issue?).

Using this system the group should be able to identify the primary problem(s).

## 3. Identify the Primary Solution

Now it's time to change gears and focus on solutions to the primary problems. Let ideas flow freely. Encourage participants to brainstorm as many solutions as possible; tell them to build off each other's ideas. Again, this is not the time to evaluate the effectiveness of each solution. Encourage participants to communicate their solutions in simple, plain language, using one sentence for each thought when possible.

Once all ideas have been recorded it's time to rate them for effectiveness. Using a similar system, ask participants to rate each solution with respect to two criteria: Impact and Feasibility. On a scale of one (very low) to 100 (very high) how impactful would each suggested solution be and how feasible is it to implement?

## 4. Make an Action Plan

Once you have identified the primary problems and solutions, it's time to transform ideas into action. The solutions identified in step three are useless until they are made concrete.

Action plans should be detailed, realistic, and fair. They should specify who is responsible for implementing and monitoring activities. The team should scrutinize the plan. Is it strategic (intended to maximize success)? Is it logistic (detailed and manageable)? Each employee should clearly understand what his or her take aways are as well as how and when to act on them. Everyone should be a part of the plan. After the meeting it's important to schedule follow ups with each team member to discuss progress. Without follow up employees tend to lose focus on the task and ignore their assigned responsibilities. It's the chair's job to ensure everyone stays on task.

For more detailed information on effective collaborative decision-making visit: [www.proactive-resolutions.com](http://www.proactive-resolutions.com)

# PRI in the Community



## PRI Director Runs for a Brighter Future

On September 21, 2008 ProActive ReSolutions Director, John McDonald, is participating in the Sydney Marathon. Training for this monumental 42km event is a feat on its own, but for John the most significant part of the event will be raising money and awareness for The Spastic Centre, an organization that greatly helped his late daughter Gabrielle.

John is hoping to raise \$1,000 for The Spastic Centre before the race date. To donate or learn more about The Spastic Centre visit John's personal fundraising page: [www.gofundraise.com.au/john54](http://www.gofundraise.com.au/john54).

# Featured Product



## Dialogue for Solutions

Are your meetings worthwhile?

Meetings are expensive. When you consider the cost of participants' hourly wages, travel, materials and catering costs then you want to ensure your staff is being productive in the hours they spend together discussing issues and solutions. Dialogue for Solutions is a step-by-step guide to structuring meetings for effective communication. Learn how to manage a group so that everyone works together to reach and implement the best possible decision --even when it's a difficult issue.